
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Landmark/District:	Capitol Hill Historic District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	647 G Street, S.E.	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
ANC:	6B	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Meeting Date:	December 15, 2022	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Case Number:	23-096	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Applicant Lionell Properties LLC seeks concept review for a three-story rear addition and front areaway at a property located in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Property Description

647 G Street SE was built in 1908 by Hutchinson and Harbin, with a design by C. E. Webb. The brick two-story with raised basement building has an angled front bay and non-historic concrete entry stairs at front. There is also an existing basement entry and steps. The rear ell (dogleg) has been modified with siding and reduced-size windows.

Proposal

The rear walls, roof, and interior would be demolished. It isn't explicit on the drawings, but it also appears that floor systems are proposed to be demolished. At the rear, a three-story full-width addition would extend approximately seven feet from the existing rear ell wall. The new rear elevation would be clad in Hardie siding. On the second and third stories would be sliding glass doors with shallow balconies. The cellar level would have a below-grade patio at the rear, with stairs leading up to the rear yard where an additional patio and parking area are shown.

At the front, an areaway is shown surrounding the projecting front bay, and extending to a depth of about two stories below ground. The areaway would extend six feet from the flat face of the building and have railings on three sides and ladder access from the front.

A large roof hatch is shown, but no handrail or railings. It isn't clear if the new and existing parapet height would meet code requirements for roof access or if railings would be required.

Evaluation

The extent of demolition might qualify as a demolition as per DCMR 10, Section 305(b) because of the removal of the rear walls, roof, and potentially all interior framing and floor assemblies. There is no information provided to show that the interior framing and floor assemblies are beyond repair or structurally unsound.

The front areaway runs contrary to the Board's *Preservation and Design Guidelines for Basement Entrances and Windows* on several points. Under 1.2 the *Guidelines* discourage "excavation that disrupts the visual grounding of the bay". The areaway is shown to extend six feet into the front yard, while the *Guidelines* under 3.4 say that "areaways should be kept to a minimum size, typically projecting no more than 36" from the face of the building". Additionally, point 3.6 is very clear that "fences around areaways are discouraged because they are obtrusive and out of character with historic site conditions".

If the roof access necessitates additional railings, visibility tests will need to be conducted to ensure that they are set back far enough to not be visible from any points along the public right-of-way.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends the Board encourage the applicant to revise their project to (1) create a front basement areaway that meets the Board's design guidelines, and (2) reduce the extent of interior structural demolition to retain and reinforce existing floor framing systems; and return to the Board for further review when ready.

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